

THE PANIZZI CLUB.

THANKS to some excellent organization on the part of Mr. Wyndham Hulme, of the Library of the Patent Office, and Mr. McKillop, late librarian of the London School of Economics, the suggestion that co-operation between the different educational and research libraries might best be promoted by getting the 'right people' together in a room was carried out with much success at a dinner held at the Imperial Restaurant on Thursday, 19th January. About a score of important libraries¹ were represented by senior members of their staff, good wishes from as many more were read out by Mr. McKillop, and promises of support, verbal or written, had been received from so many others as to justify the hope that when a more formal start is made not merely some, but all, of the 'right people' will be found helping.

The chair was taken by Mr. J. Y. W. MacAlister, who, as he recalled in his opening speech, twenty-two years ago, while Hon. Secretary of the Library

¹ Admiralty, Board of Education, British Museum, Geological Survey, India Office, Patent Office, Magdalene College, Cambridge, Trinity College, Cambridge, Cheltenham College for Ladies, Bedford College, London, University College, London, London School of Economics, Royal Society of British Architects, Athenæum Club, Royal Colonial Institute, Central Conservative Organization, Institute of Mechanical Engineers, British Medical Association, Royal Society of Medicine, Royal Sanitary Institute.

Association, took the first step in the formation of the Bibliographical Society. The coincidence seems to us a very auspicious one. Bibliographical work was one of the objects of the Library Association, and is still the subject of an occasional paper in its programmes, but the Association would have needed a separate income and a separate set of workers to do what the Bibliographical Society has done during the last twenty years. On the other hand, if a portion of this work had been substituted for the educational work of the L. A. (which has advanced far beyond its original programme), both librarianship and bibliography would have been the poorer. It may well be hoped that the new body, like the Bibliographical Society, will supplement the work of the Association, and set free its energies in much the same way.

In proposing the formation of the club, Mr. MacAlister expressed his belief that among its supporters were included the three kinds of men who, when combined, made for success — the dreamers, the organizers, and the dogged workers. The dreamers had been dreaming of a state-supported 'London Library,' which should one day rival the British Museum, but now the next step was with the organizers and workers, and their concern with the laying of foundations. The best foundation was the personal acquaintance of librarians with one another, and with one another's libraries, and if nothing else but this came of Mr. McKillop's labours they would not have been wasted. Co-operation between libraries did not necessarily involve a wholesale standardizing of their

methods—that could only lead to fossilizing—but some movement in the direction of standardizing would be very useful. Fortunately they had among them representatives of all the three classes of libraries with which they were specially concerned, those attached to Departments of State, to Universities and Colleges, and to professional and technical institutions. All of these had a certain community of interests distinct from those which bound together the municipal libraries. Because they had these separate interests they could not do what they wished inside the Library Association, but that did not mean that they were to enter into competition with it. All they needed was a small homogeneous club to deal with those things that had a special interest for themselves. When this had got to work, co-operation with the Library Association might follow later. To avoid any appearance of competition with the Association, it was proposed that they should call themselves, not a Society or an Association, but a Club, and that the Club should not try to find a descriptive name, but call itself the Panizzi Club, after the great organizer who raised the library of the British Museum from the second class to the forefront of the first. It was proposed that the subscription should not exceed 10s. 6d., and that meetings should be called, not at recurring fixed dates during a session, but when some subject had been found really worth discussion. Their future would depend entirely on the work that individual members were prepared to do. That night they were putting up a notice, ‘Good workmen wanted.’

Mr. MacAlister then formally moved the main resolution: 'That a club composed of the senior officers of State, University, and Professional Libraries be established to promote good fellowship and closer co-operation, and that the club be called the Panizzi Club.'

Extracts from letters approving of the formation of a club were then read by Mr. McKillop from Mr. Edmund Gosse (House of Lords Library), Mr. Austin Smyth (House of Commons Library), Mr. Lyster (National Library of Ireland), Mr. Dickson (Advocates' Library, Edinburgh), Mr. Minto (Signet Library, Edinburgh), Mr. Palmer (National Art Library, South Kensington), Mr. Fulcher (Science Museum, South Kensington), Mr. Headicar (London School of Economics), Mr. Victor Plarr (Royal College of Surgeons), Mr. Hudleston (War Office), Dr. Stapf (Kew Gardens), Mr. Severn (Gray's Inn Library), Mr. Newbegin (British Astronomical Association), Mr. Clifford (Chemical Society), and Sir Edward Busk.

Commenting on these letters, Mr. Wyndham Hulme said they showed a general agreement that the existing want of organization was a deplorable, but also a remediable fact, and that the modest and slender scheme proposed was what was wanted. As an old member of the Council of the Library Association he wished to say that if the Association had failed to attract librarians of the research libraries, that was not the L. A.'s fault. It had given practical proof of its respect for these librarians by taking every opportunity of electing them to its

Council. As to their own scheme in its constructive aspect author catalogues were now at a discount as compared with subject and class catalogues, and he thought that they should study the best methods of issuing these on a system, possibly a co-operative system. The most urgent work of all was the compilation of a Union List of Periodicals, because periodicals are the back-bone of specialist collections. They must find out whether several libraries were buying the same periodicals, while other periodicals, little, if at all, less good, were left unrepresented. If information of this kind were available, it would be possible to regulate purchases somewhat more scientifically.

In further support of the motion, Mr. R. W. Chambers (University College, London) spoke chiefly on the development of the interchange of books between different libraries. On a tour in Germany five or six years previously he had seen the system in full working order, and on his return had persuaded his Committee to build a strong room, in which he now had the pleasure of keeping numerous manuscripts and printed books borrowed chiefly from foreign libraries. Owing to the growth of local universities all over England we had now the same reasons for adopting this system as the Germans had had all along. A good working library might be built up in a local university with anything between 100,000 and 200,000 volumes, but for real efficiency this must be supplemented by the power of drawing occasionally on a collection of ten times this size. The British Museum was not available for this purpose,

because students could not afford to sacrifice the certainty that if they went there any book which it possessed would be obtainable. If five hundred of its rarities were constantly in Germany this certainty would be destroyed. University librarians must, therefore, increase their resources by co-operating with each other. Each library must specialise and print catalogues of its special collections, as University College had printed, or was engaged in printing, catalogues of its Dante collection, its *Celtica*, and its scientific periodicals. If a central clearing house could be arranged for, from which, as in Germany, information could be obtained as to the location of any book wanted, work would be much facilitated.

Speaking from his experience of thirteen years as Superintendent of the Reading Room of the British Museum, Mr. Barwick cordially supported the proposal for a Union List of Periodicals. Rich as the Museum was in periodicals it was constantly unable to supply those wanted by readers, and it would be an invaluable help if in such cases information could be given as to where the number wanted could be found.

Mr. Stephen Gaselee (Magdalene College, Cambridge) expressed his confidence that in Cambridge there would be alacrity in helping the objects of the club. They had no dead hand there to restrict the lending of books. If reciprocal advantages were obtained, the present lending system might well be extended to other libraries. The college libraries already lent books, and even from the Pepys collection books could be lent on the security

of a bond. Some college libraries were small, but the proportion of their books, which it would be difficult to find elsewhere, was often unusually high. Mr. Gaselee then alluded to the annual Union Lists of Periodicals, showing those in the University Library in roman type, and those in college or departmental libraries in italics; and Mr. A. G. W. Murray (Trinity College) spoke briefly of the efforts being made by the University Library to obtain lists of the new foreign books bought by the colleges.

Mr. Prideaux (Reform Club), as a member of Council of the Library Association, welcomed the appreciative references to it, and spoke on the co-operative lists of new books in State libraries printed in Italy.

Mr. Thomas (India Office) expressed the belief that his own library might be especially a gainer by the formation of the club. It already both lent and borrowed on a considerable scale, and from doing so was, perhaps, better known on the continent than at home.

Miss Fegan (Cheltenham) spoke of the help which co-operation might bring to workers in the country. She had tried and failed to arrange an interchange of periodicals among Cheltenham libraries, and was encouraged now to try again.

Miss Paterson (Bedford College) had received special kindnesses from Scottish libraries, notably from her own university, St. Andrews, and was sure that co-operation would be welcomed there.

After Mr. Hulme had added a few words about the willingness of the National Library of Wales

to lend its books, the resolution to form the Club was put from the Chair and carried unanimously.

Applications for membership were then signed, and a provisional committee was elected, consisting of Mr. Ballinger, Mr. Chambers, Mr. Clifford, Mr. Gaselee, Mr. Hulme, Miss Paterson, Mr. Plarr, Mr. Pollard and Mr. Twentyman (Board of Education). Mr. Hulme to act as Hon. Secretary and Mr. Twentyman as Treasurer.

On the motion of Mr. Barwick a vote of thanks was offered to the Chairman and the promoters of the meeting, and briefly acknowledged by Mr. MacAlister and Mr. McKillop.

A. W. P.